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ABSTRACT

Two-year colleges are complex institutions offering a multitude of courses, programs, and degrees. Existence of such diverse programs and various missions is the focus of extensive debate. Some argue that multiple offerings improve educational opportunities for students, while others suggest that multiple missions and activities lead to a lack of clear purpose and less-effective institutions. This study presents the results of a national survey of 1,725 community college faculty in 92 institutions. The respondents were asked about their views of institutional missions and future directions of their institutions. Responses suggest a number of problems as community colleges continue to expand programs, particularly community service and non-credit activities. Many faculty members are not supportive of continuing expansion of non-credit activities and basic and remedial education. The marginalization of these activities, with respect to traditional academic and vocational missions, may lead to increasing disputes over resource allocation. This survey lends support to the idea that faculty operate as independent islands, with relatively little intercommunication. Given changing student demographics, the demand for non-credit activities will likely grow, and colleges should figure out ways to integrate faculty into these efforts. Sections include: (1) Introduction and Motivation; (2) Faculty and the Evolving Mission of Community Colleges; (3) Date; (4) Analysis; and (5) Concluding Thoughts. (Contains 12 tables and 21 references.) (RDG)

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Community College Research Center

HOW DO COMMUNITY COLLEGE FACULTY VIEW INSTITUTIONAL MISSION? AN ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL SURVEY DATA

Dominic J. Brewer
Economist and Research Director
RAND Education

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ABSTRACT

Most comprehensive two-year colleges are incredibly complex, with a multitude of courses, programs, certificates, and degree offerings in everything from basic literacy to automotive repair, to college-level calculus. The existence of such diverse programs is a source of both strength and weakness and the focus of much heated debate. Open access to all has long been a highly cherished principle underlying the community college philosophy. Since these institutions serve a highly diverse group of students, many of whom enter without a clear notion of what they want, a multiple set of offerings provides more "shopping" opportunities for students.

An alternative view is that the many tasks undertaken by community colleges lead to a lack of clear purpose. The result, according to this view, is a less-effective institution that does not serve any group of students as well as it might. Implicit in this argument is the belief that organizations need clear goals to be effective, that multiple missions mean a fracturing of resources and energy. The ways the various missions have developed have also given rise to distinct groups of faculty and students, often funded in different ways, who are separate and isolated—perhaps to the detriment of institutional effectiveness.

We used a unique national survey of over 1,700 individuals to document the attitudes of community college faculty toward institutional mission in 1995-1996. Based on their responses, the evidence suggests a number of problems for community colleges as they continue to expand community service and noncredit activities. The picture that emerges is consistent with the view of faculty as independent islands operating with relatively little communication between them. Many faculty are not supportive of the continuing expansion of community college noncredit activities, particularly of the community-service variety, but also in basic and remedial education. The marginalization of these activities in relation to the traditional academic and vocational missions, with a different faculty housed in separate centers, may increasingly lead to disputes over the allocation of scarce resources. Given changing student demographics, demand for noncredit activities is likely to continue to grow, and colleges may need to figure out ways to integrate regular full-time faculty into these efforts.

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I. INTRODUCTION AND MOTIVATION

During its history, the American community college has gone through many changes. It has, at one time or another, offered college-level academic coursework (including preparation of students for transfer to a bachelor's degree program at a four-year college or university), vocational or occupational programs, and a plethora of nondegree credit courses under the rubric of continuing, community, basic, adult, developmental, or remedial education (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). These include courses for occupational upgrading, direct arrangements between an industry or government agency and the college for employee training, apprenticeship training, JTPA programs, and economic development services. Not all institutions offer all of these options—some states still maintain, for example, separate technical colleges alongside junior colleges or two-year branches of state universities—but the norm is now the comprehensive community college. Many colleges that originated as primarily transfer institutions and then expanded to vocational and occupational programs have added continuing education, developmental activities, and community service since the 1970s. The result is that most comprehensive two-year colleges are incredibly complex, with a multitude of courses, programs, certificates, and degree offerings in everything from basic literacy to automotive repair to knitting to college-level calculus (Dougherty, 1994; Cohen & Brawer, 1996).

The existence of such diverse programs—the faculty that teach them and the students they serve—is a source of both strength and weakness; it is also the focus of much heated debate. On the one hand, community colleges—as the name suggests—have always felt an obligation to serve their communities. (Indeed, they typically have a legal obligation to serve a specific geographical district.) As the needs of the community change over time, and vary from place to place, so does the mission (Vaughan, 1988). For example, the growth of relatively inexpensive and nonselective four-year state universities has reduced the reliance of poor students on two-year institutions for access to college, and community colleges have responded by increasing their offerings of occupationally oriented courses (Friedlander, 1980; Clowes & Levin, 1989). Open access to all has long been a highly cherished principle underlying the community college philosophy. This means that these institutions serve a highly diverse group of students with many differing needs. Many students enter without a clear notion of what they want; hence a multiple set of offerings provides more "shopping" opportunities for students (Grubb, 1996). Similarly, as employers

demand workers with specialized skills, colleges have moved to offer customized training, sometimes on-site, designed to meet the needs of the employer (Lorenzo, 1991). Although the reasons for the development of multiple missions are complex, the fact that community colleges perform a multitude of tasks signals their flexibility and responsiveness to local needs.[1] They have a broader social responsibility than traditionally conceived schooling; indeed, Travis (1995) has argued that community colleges have an obligation to replace other societal support systems as they decline.

An alternative view is that the many tasks undertaken by community colleges lead to a lack of clear purpose, tensions among faculty and students who are separated along programmatic lines, and resources spread too thin. The result is what Dougherty (1994) has termed the "contradictory college." The result is a less effective institution that does not serve any group of students as well as it might. Implicit in this argument is the belief that it is easier to pursue single rather than multiple goals, partly because it is harder to define priorities clearly. The notion here is that organizations need clear goals in order to be effective. Although there is little direct evidence on this point for community colleges, it is commonly expressed in the literature—for example, Reitano (1989): "The confusion of purpose and a fundamental ambivalence about priorities undermine the quality, the utility, and the education students receive." This argument is rarely backed up with concrete evidence, however. Logically, multiple missions mean a fracturing of resources and energy that makes it harder to have clear goals and to prioritize. The ways the missions have developed have also given rise to distinct groups of faculty and students, often funded in different ways, who are separate and often isolated—perhaps to the detriment of institutional effectiveness. There is some evidence consistent with the separation of faculty (Grubb & Kraskouskas, 1992) and inadequate resources (Breneman & Nelson, 1980). Although in principle one could develop proxies for the number of missions pursued by an institution, or the degree to which priorities were clear, it is very difficult to formally test the hypothesis that more missions lead to less effective performance.[2]

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[1] Reitano (1989) interprets this with skepticism: "The purposes of the two-year college border on chaos, but they have tried to make a virtue out of necessity by styling themselves as comprehensive institutions."

[2] It is possible to envisage a study design in which colleges are compared on effectiveness in a multivariate context, including measures of clarity and comprehensiveness of mission. Developing the latter, however, is far from straightforward.

The debate over the appropriate degree of "comprehensiveness" in community colleges has been around for decades. The nature of the debate has shifted somewhat, however, as the functions of these institutions have changed. Until relatively recently, the main controversial issues were the importance of the transfer function relative to terminal programs, and the extent to which colleges should offer vocational or occupational courses versus core academics. Although there is almost certainly some continuing concern over the academic/vocational split, much of the expansion of college functions over the past two decades has been in the areas of basic and adult education and in community-service activities built around noncredit courses. This further broadening of mission has generated additional arguments over the role of community colleges.

Several ongoing developments suggest that the debate over mission will continue to be important to the major clients of community colleges—students, employers, and states. First, changes to the economy which entail a greater need for ongoing retraining and short-term skill updating for adults imply at least a consolidation of the trend towards these kinds of activities—and away from more formal structured degree programs. This change has been reflected in recent federal and state policy initiatives stressing the need for connections between K–12 schools, community colleges, and the workplace through tech-prep, co-op, and other programs (Brewer & Gray, 1997). With competition from proprietary for-profit schools, community colleges have increasingly offered training geared to the needs of specific employers (Lorenzo, 1991). These trends seem likely to continue.

Second, the next decade or so will see a significant growth in the number of students traditionally served by community colleges. K–12 enrollment is the highest it has been in American history; it surpassed the previous peak set in 1971 for the first time in 1997–98 at an estimated 46.3 million, and no significant decline is expected after the baby boom echo graduates. High school enrollment is projected to increase significantly through 2007, reaching 115% of the 1996 level (National Center for Education Statistics, 1998). What has been called "tidal wave II" in some states will bring larger numbers of potential students to the doors of community colleges than ever before. They will be disproportionately poor, minority, and immigrant—groups traditionally served by the sector. Accommodating these students and their needs is likely to stimulate reflection on the appropriate role for community colleges.

Third, as states come under fiscal pressure and push for greater accountability from all institutions, community colleges are increasingly being

asked to demonstrate their effectiveness with concrete measures. This typically focuses attention on readily measurable outcomes—course loads, degree attainment, retention, etc.—and has the potential to affect priorities.[3] Similarly, there is increasing concern among policymakers about the appropriate roles of each segment of the K–12 and postsecondary education systems (mission differentiation). In particular, the perceived growth in the need for remediation, concern over duplication of programs, and rising costs at four-year institutions may lead to a more closely defined role for community colleges in some states. Finally, as Breneman and Nelson (1980) argue, "disputes over financing formulas often disguise fundamental disagreements over purpose, mission, and priorities"; as resources become tighter, the tradeoffs between emphasizing community-based learning (adult and continuing education) and transfer programs in particular become starker. It is this latter distinction that is often at the heart of the debate over mission.

The debate over the mission of the community college is of more than simply academic interest. It has a fundamental bearing on the priorities of institutions that serve millions of students and affects the options available to these students, the use of public resources, and the health of the economy. However, we have little systematic evidence on what community college practitioners themselves believe their role is. Institutional and professional association leaders are most vocal in the debate over mission, but this does not necessarily mean that faculty—who have the biggest opportunity to influence students—are equally concerned or splintered. The goal of this paper is to provide some formal quantitative evidence on this topic. We use a unique national survey of over 1,700 individuals to document the attitudes of community college faculty towards institutional mission in 1995–96. In particular, we describe how faculty prioritize the current missions of their institution and what they think these should be. We also document differences in faculty attitudes based on demographic and other characteristics. In exploring the relationship between faculty and discipline, we also provide evidence on the extent to which faculty are involved in new school-to-work initiatives, tech-prep, co-op, or contract training and whether faculty who are have different views on institutional mission. Prior to our data description and analysis, we briefly discuss the evolving mission of the community college and how faculty might be expected to view institutional mission.

[3] One of the major difficulties with assessing the effectiveness of community colleges is that it is hard to develop acceptable measures of the nondegree, not-for-credit parts of the mission. Consequently, a move towards accountability systems may lead to a strengthening of for-credit programs.

FACULTY AND THE EVOLVING MISSION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Forces Shaping the Mission

Community colleges in the United States perform a multitude of tasks including preparing millions of young Americans for direct entry into the labor market or transfer to four-year colleges, retraining and upgrading the skills of older workers, and providing basic education for adults. There are almost 1,000 publicly funded institutions offering two-year associate's degrees in academic or occupational subjects. Most states fund a system of comprehensive community colleges that teach both academic and vocational courses, although some maintain separate technical and junior colleges.[4] The precise mix of activities varies for a host of historical, political, economic, and other reasons, but the comprehensive institution serving multiple missions has become the dominant organizational form.

We do not describe in any detail the history of community colleges here (there are several good books on their development—see, for example, Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Dougherty, 1994; Vaughan, 1988; Baker, 1994).[5] Suffice it to say that, over time, the community college has undertaken an increasingly comprehensive role. Since their inception, "junior" colleges have been uniquely American institutions based on an open-door philosophy and a broad curriculum. The past thirty years in particular has seen a de-emphasis of the transfer function and a shift toward community-oriented services and vocational education, due in part to the changing needs of the student body and in part to the pressures of financial cutbacks and decreasing enrollment, particularly during the 1970s (Puyear & Vaughan, 1985). In addition, federal policy during this period dramatically increased funds for vocational education, as well as financial aid available to students to attend college.

Community colleges continue to evolve—or rather expand—in terms of offerings. For example, recent changes to vocational education policy reflected in federal legislation such as the Perkins (II) Act of 1990 and the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994, as well as state and local reform initiatives, have resulted in community colleges introducing new (or expanding old) programs—such as tech-prep, school-to-work, service learning, and cooperative education—

[4] The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) has attempted to classify institutions according to curricular emphasis, but the requisite data are not available.

[5] Interpreting the history of community colleges–when one function arose and when another declined, for example–is often controversial. Readers should refer to these citations.

which emphasize coupling classroom work to applied experience in local business, government, or nonprofit settings.

Community colleges have developed multiple missions for a host of complex, related reasons. One way to view the development is to consider the institution as adapting to the needs and demands of its clients—potential students, employers, and governments. For example, community colleges have always felt an obligation to serve the needs of their potential students; as this group has changed, colleges have adapted. The student pool in turn has changed because of demographic trends (e.g., growth in the population, increasing racial/ethnic diversity of the population) and developments in other institutions (e.g., the introduction of compulsory and near-universal high school in the early part of this century, the dramatic postwar expansion of publicly subsidized noncompetitive four-year colleges, the poor quality of high school graduates, the growth of the for-profit proprietary sector). In recent years, the noticeable movement away from degree programs and towards noncredit/credit continuing education courses that are not degree-oriented makes sense for colleges in that "clients" who pursue such programs were previously an "untapped resource" (Gollattscheck, 1983). Since colleges are typically funded on the basis of student enrollments, catering to new groups of students is a matter of fiscal survival.

Community colleges have a long history of ties to local business and industry. The needs of employers, and the labor market more broadly, have certainly influenced the types of programs offered. Dougherty (1994) notes that local initiatives gave rise to most community colleges. Business professional organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce saw colleges as instruments of economic development.[6] Colleges provided an inexpensive way of ensuring an adequate supply of labor.[7] The increasing emphasis on short- and long-term skill-specific programs and lifelong learning might be seen as the latest manifestation of this role (Lorenzo, 1991; Friedlander, 1980). And colleges continue to take an active role in local economic development partnerships.

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[6] Dougherty (1994) notes that business supported the establishment of an average of 68% of the community colleges he studied in California, Illinois, New York, and Washington. He also found that business people provided a major part of the membership of the community college committees which were formed prior to the establishment of colleges.

[7] This is tied to the notion propounded by some scholars that educational institutions such as community colleges help reproduce the class structure of capitalist society by turning out graduates trained and socialized to work in privately owned enterprises (see Dougherty, 1988, for a discussion). It is often argued that working-class and minority students are "shunted" into low-status, low-payoff vocational education programs that offer few opportunities for advancement.

Government policy has also played a critical role in the development of community colleges, which are, after all, publicly funded institutions. Indeed, some have argued that the private interests of students and employers are not sufficient to account for the growth of the community college sector (Dougherty, 1988). The expansion of vocational activities, particularly during the last third of this century, was spurred in large part by the 1963 Vocational Education Act and subsequent infusions of federal funds (Kerckoff & Bell, 1998; Cohen & Brawer, 1996). The ways in which states (and localities) fund and structure their postsecondary education and training systems clearly has a key influence on the ways in which community colleges prioritize their activities.

Faculty and Institutional Mission

It is misleading to think that community colleges have been wholly shaped by external forces—by other educational institutions, by the changing demographics of potential students, by government legislation, or by economic changes. The shifting emphasis can be attributed in part to vocal national leaders from the community colleges themselves. As Cohen and Brawer (1996) have pointed out, there is little serious academic scholarship on community colleges. Consequently, the debate over mission has been dominated by these community college leaders. An important but largely neglected issue, therefore, is whether disagreements over mission priorities affect colleges on a day-to-day level.

Faculty have day-to-day contact with students and are responsible for many of the important decisions in community colleges. How do they view institutional mission? Are they in agreement on the priorities of their college? Do they believe that goals are clear? Although there is little direct research on the topic, faculty are hired to teach a particular subject and these subjects are often organized around a particular mission. Most faculty in the liberal arts and sciences, for example, serve the academic mission, mainly teaching for-credit courses to students who are pursuing an AA or AS degree. Vocational faculty may teach a wider array of certificate or AS courses. However, these demarcations are far from straightforward: many students have no intention of earning any type of credential, and academic and vocational faculty may teach many of the same students.

Some regular faculty may also teach continuing and community education courses, although many part-time instructors are hired for this purpose. Faculty are often physically separated too—academic and vocational faculty typically have offices on different parts of a campus, and part-time and noncreadit instructors often do not have permanent offices at all. Obviously these are

generalizations. Every college is organized differently, often depending on the way the state or locality finances a particular set of activities.

Faculty views on mission are likely to depend in part on their own specialty and perhaps their status—full-time or part-time and permanent or temporary attachment to the institution. There is anecdotal evidence that many older academic faculty are not happy with the general shift towards developmental activities. Because the twin roles of a collegiate academic function and occupationally oriented curricula have coexisted for a longer period, their coexistence is accepted. In recent years, there has been a conscious attempt to more closely integrate academic and vocational curricula. Disagreements over mission often appear to occur when continuing and developmental programs are added that serve students who generally do not have a history of "college" and often are acquiring high school level skills, basic literacy, and numeracy (remedial education). Although formal evidence is scarce, often part-time instructors teach these courses who have only tangential connections to the college.

To the extent that a college's mission has changed over time, faculty are likely to reflect this change. For example, a college which had a strong transfer base but has moved increasingly to adult literacy and remedial education is likely to have many faculty hired before the transformation took place. The reality of tenure means that turnover is low and many faculty in academic and traditional vocational areas may have witnessed a considerable shift in the emphases (and perhaps resources) in their institution. Seniority and rank may therefore be important factors in determining attitudes toward institutional mission. Other factors might also plausibly influence perceptions of appropriate mission—for example, demographic characteristics such as sex, race, and ethnicity—but it is hard to predict any systematic relationships a priori.

In the remainder of the paper, we seek to shed some light on institutional mission in community colleges, using some unique national survey data to present for the first time a systematic picture of faculty attitudes toward mission priorities. The main questions we try to answer are

> What do faculty think the current mission priorities of their institution are?
>
> What differences are there between types of faculty in their perceptions of current mission priorities, and what factors explain these differences?
>
> What do faculty think the mission priorities of the institution should be?

What differences are there between types of faculty in ideal mission priorities, and what factors explain these differences?

In answering these questions, the paper also provides some evidence on the extent to which institutions and faculty are involved in "new" initiatives such as tech-prep, co-op, and school-to-work programs.

DATA

An analysis of the views of community college faculty on institutional mission could be done in various ways. For example, a qualitative study, consisting of interviews with a number of community college instructors, would provide rich detail on faculty views, how they were formed, and their impact on institutional governance and effectiveness. Alternatively, a quantitative study would provide a more generalizable statistical portrait of faculty attitudes. In addition, it would provide an opportunity to understand the views of a larger and more diverse group of individuals. However, no existing national data are up to this task: the National Survey of Postsecondary Faculty, which includes both two- and four-year college instructors and is conducted every few years, does not contain any questions pertaining to institutional mission.[8]

In this paper, we offer some preliminary evidence on community college faculty's views of institutional mission based on survey data. In 1995–96 the National Center for Research in Vocational Education and RAND administered a mail survey to a national sample of 3,500 community college faculty to gather data on the characteristics and attitudes of faculty and their linkages to the labor market (Brewer & Gray, 1997).[9] Background items covered instructors' personal characteristics (e.g., age, sex, race, ethnicity); educational background (e.g., years of education, certification and degree status, colleges attended); work experience (e.g., years of labor market experience, type of positions held, current links to employers); and professional status (e.g., salaried, full-time/part-time, tenured, subject specialty). Other questions concerned faculty's involvement in various college reform initiatives and use of innovative teaching practices, attitudes toward their job and institution, and the nature and extent of links to

[8] Huber (1998) has analyzed a recent Carnegie Foundation survey of community college faculty attitudes. Only a limited amount of information was collected on attitudes towards mission (pp. 22-23), and it is not directly comparable to that reported in this paper.

[9] Case studies of four community colleges across the country were also conducted. Again, these focused on the types of links faculty have to the labor market and their communities and the institutional context within which faculty undertake such activities. Only tangential information was gathered on institutional mission on these visits, so these data are not utilized here.

their institution, their teaching field, the labor market, and the community. Drawing on previous surveys by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and others, advice from the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and other experts, and a pilot test of a draft survey instrument with faculty at two sites in the Los Angeles Community College District, a final survey questionnaire was completed in September 1995. All questions pertained to any individual who had at least some instructional duties during the 1994–95 academic year.

Faculty were asked three questions pertaining specifically to institutional mission. First, respondents were presented with the following question: "Community colleges serve many missions. Please rank the following from most important (#1) to least important (#5) based on how your institution currently operates." The five options given were "preparing students for transfer to a four-year institution," "preparing students for entry into the workplace," "teaching basic skills and literacy," "community service," and "other (please specify)." We refer to this item as current mission. Second, respondents were asked to rank the same five options according to "how you think your institution should operate in the future." We call this ideal mission. These two items necessarily force respondents to choose among fairly standard descriptions of mission.[10] Finally, faculty were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were personally with "institutional mission or philosophy" on a five-point scale (1 = "very dissatisfied," 5 = "very satisfied"). An analysis of the responses to these items is presented in this paper.[11]

For the survey sample, we first obtained (again with the assistance of AACC) mailing lists of community college faculty from slightly over one hundred randomly selected institutions nationwide.[12] From these lists, we then randomly selected about 3,500 names. We included academic and vocational, tenure-track and non-tenure-track, part-time and full-time faculty who had instructional duties

[10] It is of course quite possible that faculty place diverse interpretations on these descriptions (nothing more detailed was provided on the survey). For example, "community service" could be interpreted broadly as "noncredit" or something much narrower (such as renting out facilities to a local group). Without further investigation, there is no way to know whether this is a problem, although it seems unlikely that there would be systematic differences in defining these terms.

[11] The NCRVE/RAND survey was not designed to provide information specifically on institutional mission (rather the focus was on linkages to the labor market). A survey instrument specifically for this purpose would likely contain a much broader array of questions on the topic.

[12] About four hundred randomly selected schools were contacted with a request for a list of all their faculty. We received responses from approximately half. We selected about one hundred colleges who supplied the most usable lists.

in 1994–95. The survey was administered by mail in late October, 1995.[13] Data collection continued until April 1, 1996. During this time, we conducted three mailings and also placed follow-up phone calls; these calls indicated that many nonrespondents simply did not receive the survey due to bad addresses or job changes. The overall response rate was about sixty percent.

Our survey provides some institution-level data, including benefits of employment, professional development opportunities, and campus climate. Additional institution-level data from other sources were merged into our sample. Information on a college's region and size were obtained from the 1994–95 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). This was further supplemented by the AACC Annual Survey on the governance structure of a college (e.g., single-campus, branch campus of a state university, part of a multicampus district) and its urbanicity.

The final sample consists of 1,725 faculty in ninety-two institutions.[14] A profile of respondents is shown in Table 1, which contains selected characteristics for all respondents. The table shows that community college faculty are overwhelmingly white, about half are male, and the average age is over 47. Most community college instructors' highest degree is a master's (or the equivalent), but almost one-quarter of academic faculty have a doctorate. About one-third of all faculty have tenure, reflecting the fact that a large number of faculty hold instructor status and that about half are part-time.[15]

Faculty were divided into four groups based on self-reported "primary teaching field": academic, vocational, developmental, or other. "Vocational"

[13] In some cases the survey was mailed to the home of the faculty member; in other cases it was mailed to the school/departmental address.

[14] 2,159 surveys were returned: 61.1% of the initial mailing. It was determined that 337 of these were refusals or people who had changed schools, were no longer teaching, had died or retired, or were ineligible. We suspect that many of the surveys failed to reach faculty due to incorrect faculty lists and mailing addresses. Of the 3,500 initially mailed, 1,725 (49%) valid surveys were used.

[15] The full- versus part-time classification is based on our best estimate of how many hours per week faculty say they work. We arbitrarily define those working thirty-five hours per week or more as full-time.

TABLE 1
Selected Characteristics of All Faculty in the NCRVE/RAND Community College Faculty Survey

Characteristic	
Mean age in years	47.5 (9.5)
Mean years teaching in community colleges	11.9 (8.9)
Mean years teaching in current institution	10.7 (8.6)
Male	52.9%
Hispanic	2.6%
Black	3.6%
BA as highest degree	18.0%
MA as highest degree	62.4%
PhD as highest degree	15.8%
Full professor	14.9%
Associate professor	9.4%
Assistant professor	7.2%
Instructor	30.7%
Adjunct professor	15.7%
No rank	14.1%
Tenured	33.5%
Union member	56.0%
Part-time	50.9%
Urban institution	57.4%
Rural institution	13.3%
Northeast region	16.0%
North central region	18.9%
Western region	30.4%
Single campus	57.4%
Multicampus	20.1%
Mean total enrollment	10,275 (9,380)

Notes: Standard deviations are enclosed in parentheses. The maximum number of observations is 1,725.

TABLE 2
Alternative Classifications of Faculty by Discipline/Program in the NCRVE/RAND Community College Faculty Survey

Category	Full-time %	Part-time %
Classified using reported discipline		
Vocational	24.2	19.0
Academic	20.8	23.1
Developmental	1.3	2.1
Other	3.2	6.2
Self-classified		
Primarily teach vocational courses	11.6	10.2
Primarily teach academic courses	29.0	32.1
Teach academic and vocational courses equally	5.9	4.9
Other	2.8	3.5

Note: The maximum number of observations is 1,725.

included faculty whose primary teaching field is in education-related subjects, social work, agricultural education, business and office education, health occupations, marketing/distributive education, occupational home economics, consumer and homemaker education, communications or computing, or technology education/industrial arts/trade. "Academic" included faculty whose primary teaching field is English, mathematics, physical sciences, biological sciences, social sciences, humanities, or foreign languages. "Developmental" included faculty whose primary teaching field was listed as "developmental or remedial education." "Other" refers to faculty in fields not in the preceding groups. Given the somewhat arbitrary nature of our definitions—for example, business or computing classes could be considered academic rather than vocational—we also asked faculty to classify themselves by describing their teaching role as "primarily teach vocational courses," "primarily teacher academic courses," "teach both vocational and academic courses equally," or "other."

An overview of the disciplinary classifications of the faculty in the NCRVE/RAND sample is shown in Table 2. Using our definitions, vocational and academic faculty are evenly split and together make up 87% of all faculty in the sample. About half of these are part-timers. The absolute number of developmental and other faculty is small, though they are overwhelmingly part-time (13% of the total faculty in the sample is developmental or other, and about 65% of them are part-time). Throughout the rest of the paper we use this classification by discipline. Interestingly, faculty are much more inclined to classify themselves as "primarily teaching academic courses"—fully 61.2% of the sample versus just 21.8% who claim to be teaching primarily vocational courses—although this result is hard to interpret without further data.[16]

One question about the sample is whether it is representative of community college faculty nationwide. A point of comparison is the National Survey of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF), collected by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). This survey was conducted in 1987–88 and again in 1992-93 and was designed to produce nationally representative estimates of the characteristics of faculty in two- and four-year institutions using weights supplied by NCES to convert sample statistics. Using over 8,000 responses from public two-year college faculty in 1992–93, we calculated selected faculty

[16] For example, it may reflect the stigma attached to the term vocational; most "faculty" aspire to a "collegiate" setting and therefore prefer to describe themselves as academic. This finding might also reflect the increasing integration of academic and vocational curricula. Such explanations are, however, purely speculative.

TABLE 3
Comparison of Surveys on Selected Variables

Characteristic	NCRVE/RAND 1995 Survey %	NSOPF-93 %
Male	52.9	54.1
White	88.1	86.8
BA or less	21.8	27.9
MA/professional degree	62.4	61.8
Full professor	14.9	10.4
Tenured	33.5	24.3
Union member	56.0	57.7

Notes: NSOPF-93 is the National Survey of Postsecondary Faculty, 1993. Figures for NSOPF-93 refer to public two-year college faculty only and are weighted (using NCES weights) to be nationally representative. The maximum number of observations is 1,725.

characteristics and compared them with our own sample. The results of this exercise are shown in Table 3.

The table shows that our sample is similar to NSOPF-93 in terms of faculty gender (52.9% male in our sample versus 54.1% in NSOPF-93) and race (88.1% white in our sample versus 86.8% white in NSOPF-93). Our respondents are slightly older, of higher rank, and more likely to have tenure than those in NSOPF-93 (although given the aging of faculty over time and the two-year time period between the surveys, this gap is probably smaller than it appears). Overall, however, the NCRVE/RAND final sample would appear broadly representative of community college faculty nationwide.[17]

ANALYSIS

Views of Institutional Mission

In this section, we present the results of an analysis of survey items on faculty perceptions of institutional mission. We rely primarily on descriptive statistics—

[17] It is not possible to compare the sample to NSOPF-93 on some important dimensions—for example, part-time status—due to differences in survey items. It should be noted too that conversations with NCES staff suggest that they have considerable difficulty in calculating accurate sample weights for these items in order to produce "nationally representative" estimates.

means and frequencies—although in some cases, we estimate multivariate statistical models as noted. Table 4 shows, for all faculty, the mean current and ideal rank of each mission priority. Table 5 shows the underlying frequencies. A lower number means that faculty assign a higher priority to that mission (i.e., 1 = ranked first, 5 = ranked fifth).

Several things are striking about the results. Community colleges are truly comprehensive in the sense that, on average, faculty cannot agree on one single mission. The tables suggest that faculty are relatively evenly split between workplace and transfer as the two most important current missions of the community college; there is no statistically significant difference in the means ($t = 1.53$, $p < .2$). Marginally more faculty rank workplace preparation over transfer. In the modal ranking, most faculty clearly believe basic skills are the third most important mission, followed by community service as a distant fourth; the overall mean priority given to basic skills is statistically significantly lower than the mean rank for transfer ($t = 3.31$, $p < .01$) and workplace ($t = 4.93$, $p < .01$). The interesting point about these overall results is the very low rank given to community-service activities.

How does current mission diverge from ideal mission? Tables 4 and 5 suggest a degree of discord between current and ideal mission. Column three of Table 4 shows the difference in the means in the preceding two columns; the fourth column, on the other hand, calculates the difference between current and ideal rankings for each individual faculty member. A positive number indicates that faculty would like to assign a higher priority to that mission relative to the status quo. The overall mean rank of ideal mission is similar to current mission, with faculty being more likely on average to emphasize workplace skills over the transfer function. And both workplace and transfer would receive more emphasis than they do currently relative to basic skills in particular. The difference between ideal and current missions is statistically significant only for workplace ($t = 2.48$, $p < .02$), which would receive a higher priority, and basic skills ($t = 3.29$, $p < .01$), which would receive a lower priority. Ideally, workplace received stronger emphasis than it currently has—for example, 33.3% of all faculty think workplace skills should be the primary mission compared to 28.1% who say it is the current primary mission. Again, these results suggest that faculty overall want greater emphasis on the traditional functions of community colleges—transfer and workplace preparation—and believe that too much emphasis is placed on community service and skills.

TABLE 4
Mean Current and Ideal Ranking of Mission Priorities, All Faculty

Mission	Current	Ideal	Difference in Means	Mean Difference
Transfer	2.52 (1.3)	2.48 (1.2)	+0.04	0.00 (1.2)
Workplace	2.45 (1.3)	2.33 (1.3)	+0.12	0.40 (1.1)
Basic Skills	2.66 (1.1)	2.80 (1.1)	-0.14	-0.15 (1.2)
Community Service	3.35 (1.1)	3.39 (1.0)	-0.04	0.00 (1.0)
Other	4.16 (1.5)	4.00 (1.5)	+0.16	0.15 (1.3)

Notes: Standard deviations are enclosed in parentheses. The maximum number of observations is 1,496.

TABLE 5
Percentage Ranking of Current and Ideal Mission Priorities, All Faculty

Mission	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5
Transfer					
Current	27.1	24.9	24.6	15.6	7.8
Ideal	26.0	29.1	23.6	13.4	7.9
Workplace					
Current	28.1	29.0	21.3	13.2	8.5
Ideal	33.3	30.6	15.8	10.5	9.7
Basic Skills					
Current	16.2	27.0	36.9	13.8	6.0
Ideal	14.5	22.1	38.7	18.3	6.3
Community Service					
Current	8.0	16.2	15.3	52.7	7.6
Ideal	6.2	15.0	19.6	52.6	6.6
Other					
Current	3.5	2.5	5.0	9.4	69.0
Ideal	14.8	5.5	6.9	7.2	64.9

To what extent do faculty within an institution agree in their view of current mission priorities? Decomposing the variance in responses into individual and institutional components suggests that 9.1% of the total variance in the ranking of the current transfer mission occurs among faculty within a school, and the remaining 90.9% across faculty at different schools. The figure for within-school variance is 8.2% for workplace, 7.0% for basic skills, and 5.5% for community

TABLE 6
Mean Current and Ideal Ranking of Mission Priorities, by Faculty Type

Mission	Vocational Faculty			Academic Faculty		
	Rank 1 %	Rank 2 %	Mean	Rank 1 %	Rank 2 %	Mean
Transfer						
Current	21.4	25.7	2.64 (1.2)	33.1	42.0	2.40
Ideal	13.7	33.4	2.67 (1.1)	36.8	25.7	(1.3)
						2.31
						(1.3)
Workplace						
Current	35.1	22.0	2.45 (1.4)	21.6	35.3	2.46
Ideal	47.5	20.0	2.20 (1.4)	21.4	38.2	(1.1)
						2.44
						(1.1)
Basic Skills						
Current	0.2	12.8	2.69 (1.1)	0.0	19.1	2.60
Ideal	13.0	20.8	2.86 (1.1)	16.6	23.9	(1.1)
						2.72
						(1.1)
Community Service						
Current	0.3	9.1	3.27 (1.1)	0.0	7.3	3.44
Ideal	5.8	17.0	3.35 (1.0)	6.8	13.4	(1.1)
						3.41
						(1.0)

Notes: Standard deviations are enclosed in parentheses. The maximum number of observations is 626 for vocational faculty and 632 for academic faculty.

service. Not surprisingly, there is more variation attributable to faculty within a school on ideal mission: the figures are 9.9% for transfer, 8.7% for workplace, 9.6% for basic skills, and 7.8% for community service.

How do views of mission differ across types of faculty? As discussed earlier, it is expected that faculty from different disciplines would have contrasting views on institutional mission. Table 6 displays the mean current and ideal ranking of each mission by academic and vocational faculty and the percentage assigning a rank of 1 or 2 to it. The table suggests that vocational faculty are more likely to believe that the ideal first mission of their institution should be workplace preparation (47.5%) than academic faculty (21.4%). The mean ideal ranking for transfer and workplace missions are statistically significantly different

between academic and vocational faculty ($t = 5.01$, $p < .01$ for transfer, $t = 2.96$, $p < .01$ for workplace). Of academic faculty, 36.8% rate the transfer function as the ideal top priority for their institution, compared to just 13.7% of vocational faculty.

Perhaps the most interesting findings are for basic skills and community service. While it is true that career disciplines are more likely to give top ranking to workforce preparation, and that those teaching academic disciplines stress transfer, both groups give community-service functions (which are usually built around noncredit courses) the lowest priority and view basic instruction as a necessary evil. The overall means suggest that *both* academic and vocational faculty would give it a slightly lower priority than it currently has. However, the distribution of responses is radically different: many more academic and vocational faculty, but particularly the former, believe basic skills should be given a priority of 1 or 2 in contrast to the number who believe it currently is ranked this high. This may reflect the fact that some regular faculty are likely to teach some basic skills classes (in core subjects), and that they are concerned about the academic skills of students taking academic classes.

Similarly, academic and vocational faculty are largely in agreement over the low (and lower) priority that should be accorded to community-service activities. Colleges are not properly viewed as community development agencies. The rift between schooling and service has been accentuated in recent years by the creation of what some have called "shadow colleges"—corporate service centers, JTPA units, or one-stop welfare-to-work offices that now carry out some community-service tasks (Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Jacobs & Teahan, 1997). Occupational and academic faculty may find themselves on one side of a bifurcated institution. At a minimum, the results suggest the respondents' collective skepticism toward the community-service function, and this suggests a potential resistance to a widening of the role of community colleges in this area.

How do faculty responses vary across other characteristics? Table 7 shows mean responses by sex and race. There are a few statistically significant differences by sex or race, but there do not appear to be any systematic patterns.

While the descriptive means and frequencies provide an interesting picture of differences among types of faculty, we cannot be certain that the characteristics noted have independent statistically significant effects on perceptions of mission. To determine whether this is the case, we ran a series of multiple regression models.[18] We sought to explain variation in individual

[18] Since the dependent variable in these regressions is the individual's ranking of each priority on a 1–5 scale, simple ordinary least squares regression is strictly inappropriate; however, similar results

responses to current and ideal mission as a function of a large number of individual (age, experience, sex, race/ethnicity, education level, rank, tenure status, part-time status, discipline) and institutional (urbanicity, institution size, region, type of campus) characteristics. These models typically explain under 5% of the variance

TABLE 7
Mean Current and Ideal Ranking of Mission Priorities, by Sex and Race

	Men		Women		Blacks		Whites	
Mission	Current	Ideal	Current	Ideal	Current	Ideal	Current	Ideal
Transfer	2.52	2.42	2.52	2.56	2.91	2.92	2.49	2.47
	(1.3)	(1.2)	(1.2)	(1.2)	(1.2)	(1.3)	(1.3)	(1.2)
Workplace	2.42	2.30	2.48	2.37	2.85	2.50	2.41	2.31
	(1.2)	(1.3)	(1.3)	(1.3)	(1.4)	(1.5)	(1.2)	(1.3)
Basic Skills	2.63	2.86	2.69	2.71	2.63	2.85	2.67	2.80
	(1.1)	(1.1)	(1.1)	(1.1)	(1.2)	(1.0)	(1.1)	(1.1)
Community	3.37	3.37	3.33	3.40	2.94	3.37	3.38	3.39
Service	(1.1)	(1.0)	(1.1)	(1.0)	(1.2)	(1.0)	(1.1)	(1.0)

Notes: Standard deviations are enclosed in parentheses. The maximum number of observations is 794 for men, 694 for women, 49 for blacks, and 1,315 for whites.

in responses among faculty, and there are few consistent patterns across demographic characteristics or job status with the exception of discipline and part-time/full-time status. They confirm that academic faculty are statistically more likely to assign a higher priority to the transfer mission and vocational faculty a higher priority to workplace preparation, even when other factors are controlled for. These multivariate analyses also indicate that part-time faculty are likely to view the ideal mission as placing less emphasis on both transfer and workplace and a greater priority on basic skills, other things being equal.

The third question on the NCRVE/RAND survey pertaining directly to mission was Are you personally satisfied or dissatisfied with "institutional mission or philosophy." A higher number indicates a greater degree of satisfaction with mission (1 = very dissatisfied, 5 = very satisfied). As shown in Table 8, faculty overall are moderately satisfied with mission, although only around one in ten are very satisfied. The table shows relatively few differences between academic and

in terms of the direction of statistically significant effects (which is what we are primarily interested in) are obtained if ordered logit models are estimated instead.

vocational faculty with the exception that many more academic faculty rate themselves very dissatisfied (6.1% versus 3.7%). Multivariate analyses of this item suggest that both academic and vocational faculty are more likely to be satisfied with institutional mission than developmental and other faculty, controlling for other factors. While the table shows that full-time faculty are far more likely than part-time faculty to be very satisfied with mission, part-time status does not appear to have any statistically significant independent effect on overall satisfaction with mission, controlling for other factors.

TABLE 8
Dissatisfaction with Institutional Mission

Faculty	Very Satisfied %	Satisfied %	Neither %	Dissatisfied %	Very Dissatisfied %	Mean
All	10.8	43.6	29.7	10.8	5.1	3.44
Academic	10.6	45.4	30.1	9.6	6.1	3.43
Vocational	11.7	43.7	28.9	10.3	3.7	3.51
Part-time	8.4	44.0	35.2	8.7	4.6	3.42
Full-time	13.2	43.2	24.2	13.0	5.6	3.46

Notes: 1 = very dissatisfied, 5 = very satisfied. The maximum number of observations is 1,645.

"New" Initiatives: Participation in Contract Training, Tech-Prep, School-to-Work, and Co-op

We now turn to a brief examination of faculty attitudes towards mission based on their participation in several activities, which are relatively new or have been expanded recently in state and federal policy. This is of interest because these activities are, in many ways, on the cutting edge of community college activities and their developing mission. The RAND/NCRVE survey asked faculty to indicate (1 = none and 5 = a lot) if their college had, and if they were personally involved in, contract training ("contract with local business to develop firm-specific training"), a tech-prep program, a co-op program, or a state or federal school-to-work program. It is worth noting that these terms can encompass a range of activities and that they are not mutually exclusive (for example, federal/state school-to-work activities may include co-op, school-based enterprises, etc.). Co-op programs are arrangements whereby colleges, government agencies, and private firms establish "joint ventures [that range] from

TABLE 9
Institutional Participation in New Initiatives

Level of Agreement	Contract Training %	Tech-Prep %	School-to-Work %	Co-op %
50% of faculty agree activity takes place	92.4	97.8	69.6	75.0
80% of faculty agree activity takes place	35.9	71.7	18.5	28.2
90% of faculty agree activity takes place	28.3	44.6	10.9	13.0

sharing facilities to offering mutually sponsored courses" (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). Tech-prep "aims to develop articulated programs that offer four years of sequential course work intended to provide training for specific technical careers" (Stern, D., Finkelstein, N., Stone, J. R., Latting, J., & Dornsife, C., 1994). Before examining the attitudes toward mission of faculty involved in these activities, we present an overview of their prevalence.

Table 9 classifies whether an institution offers each activity based on individual faculty's responses to the question "Does your institution have the following program?" The table shows the percentage of all institutions in our sample from a given institution agree that it takes place in their college (these cutoffs are chosen arbitrarily). There is considerable variation according to the criteria used. For example, if one adopts the weak standard that only half the faculty in our sample from a college have to agree that it has contract training for us to label it so, more than 90% of the institutions in our sample have it; if one uses the more stringent 90% cutoff, only 28% of the schools would be classified as having contract training. This could mean that respondents had doubts over how to interpret these survey items. However, assuming this was not a widespread problem, the results suggest *a considerable amount of ignorance about the existence of these activities*. Overall, tech-prep and contract training are the most common activities.

An alternative indicator of the prevalence of each activity is the following: in our sample, 77.3% of all respondents believe that their institution has contract training, 85.3% believe it has tech-prep, 62.2% believe it has a state or federal school-to–work program, and 66.0% believe it has a co-op program. Table 10 shows the percentage of all faculty reporting they are involved in each activity,

where involvement indicates a moderate or great deal of involvement (a 4 or 5 on a 1–5 scale). The numbers are small for each activity—well under 10%. If we limit attention to those institutions in which more than 90% of faculty from that school in our sample agree that the activity exists, the participation rates rise somewhat, although the numbers are still modest. Only in the case of tech-prep and co-op are more than 10% of faculty involved.

TABLE 10
Individual Involvement in New Initiatives

Level of Agreement	Contract Training %	Tech-Prep %	School-to-Work %	Co-op %
All	6.3	8.4	3.1	6.9
50% cutoff	6.3	8.4	3.7	8.2
80% cutoff	7.9	9.7	5.1	12.5
90% cutoff	7.9	12.0	5.8	16.2

TABLE 11
Mean Level of Individual Involvement in New Initiatives, by Faculty Type

Initiative	Vocational	Academic	Full-time	Part-time
Contract	2.12	1.31	1.73	1.69
	(1.4)	(0.8)	(1.2)	(1.3)
Tech-Prep	2.33	1.56	2.08	1.69
	(1.4)	(1.1)	(1.4)	(1.2)
School-to-Work	1.82	1.49	1.78	1.47
	(1.2)	(0.9)	(1.2)	(1.0)
Co-op	2.34	1.40	2.11	1.60
	(1.5)	(0.9)	(1.5)	(1.1)

Note: Standard deviations are enclosed in parentheses.

The overall mean levels of involvement (i.e., without imposing any institutional cutoff) for vocational and academic faculty and for full- and part-time faculty are shown in Table 11. This table shows the relatively modest levels of participation but confirms what we would expect: vocational faculty have a statistically significant higher level of involvement on average than academic faculty.

TABLE 12
Mean Current and Ideal Rank, by Involvement in New Initiatives

	Transfer	Workplace	Basic Skills	Community Service
		Contract Training		
Involved				
-current	2.72 (1.3)	2.56 (1.3)	2.67 (1.1)	3.26 (1.2)
-ideal	2.90 (1.2)	2.41 (1.5)	2.87 (1.1)	3.10 (1.0)
Not Involved				
-current	2.50 (1.2)	2.44 (1.3)	2.66 (1.1)	3.36 (1.1)
-ideal	2.45 (1.2)	2.32 (1.3)	2.79 (1.1)	3.41 (1.0)
		Tech Prep		
Involved				
-current	2.61 (1.3)	2.49 (1.3)	2.77 (1.1)	3.28 (1.0)
-ideal	2.63 (1.1)	2.23 (1.5)	3.13 (1.1)	3.27 (1.0)
Not Involved				
-current	2.51 (1.2)	2.44 (1.2)	2.65 (1.1)	3.36 (1.1)
-ideal	2.47 (1.2)	2.34 (1.3)	2.77 (1.1)	3.40 (1.0)
		School-to-Work		
Involved				
-current	2.55 (1.3)	2.64 (1.3)	2.72 (1.2)	3.23 (1.0)
-ideal	2.85 (1.2)	2.23 (1.5)	2.79 (0.9)	3.40 (0.9)
Not Involved				
-current	2.52 (1.3)	2.44 (1.3)	2.66 (1.1)	3.36 (1.1)
-ideal	2.47 (1.2)	2.33 (1.3)	2.80 (1.1)	3.39 (1.0)
		Co-op		
Involved				
-current	2.45 (1.3)	2.57 (1.3)	2.70 (1.0)	3.25 (1.2)
-ideal	2.58 (1.0)	2.19 (1.4)	2.70 (1.0)	3.47 (1.1)
Not Involved				
-current	2.52 (1.3)	2.44 (1.3)	2.66 (1.1)	3.36 (1.1)
-ideal	2.48 (1.2)	2.34 (1.3)	2.81 (1.1)	3.38 (1.0)

Note: Standard deviations are enclosed in parentheses. (Maximum number of observations is N=1398)

Finally, in Table 12 we turn to an examination of differences in perceptions of mission between faculty who are involved in these new initiatives and those who are not involved (where, again, involvement is defined as a 4 or 5

on a 1–5 scale). Recall that a higher mean indicates that the mission priority is ranked lower. In general, differences are small (and not statistically significant) between those involved and those not involved in each initiative. The differences that exist can probably be explained by the academic/vocational faculty split discussed earlier. The biggest difference is among faculty involved in contract training and school-to-work activities. They are less likely to believe that the transfer mission is a priority, and rate both workplace and basic skills as more important than transfer. This points to another possible flashpoint within the community college between traditional collegiate faculty and those active in continuing education and community service.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The debate over the appropriate mission of community colleges continues. Can a single institution effectively and successfully combine vocational and occupational training with college-level academic courses, basic literacy, and community education? Institutions serving just one of these purposes might be more focused and therefore better able to serve students and employers. Tackling multiple missions overloads administrators and faculty, results in a lack of focus, and spreads resources thin. On the other hand, the fact that community colleges have evolved to perform many of these functions simultaneously might suggest a responsiveness to community needs (Vaughan, 1988), with emphases on different functions varying quite appropriately according to the needs of each local community.

In principle, one could conduct a study of the relationship between community college mission and institutional effectiveness, assuming outcome measures were available and reliable. One approach would be to examine variation in systems across the country—some states, for example, include associate's degree programs at four-year institutions and retain technical schools, while most use a comprehensive community college model. Is there a difference in effectiveness if institutions are organized one way or another? Alternatively, one could examine all comprehensive community colleges and determine if measures of effectiveness are related to the degree to which they pursue multiple missions or the degree to which institutional priorities are clear. Are the most effective schools those focused on only one mission? Can we pinpoint strategies that enable a college to be successful across multiple missions, and if so, what are the enabling conditions? No such study has been done and, given the current state of outcomes indicators, is unlikely to be

possible in any systematic fashion in the near future. Yet over the next decade, as argued earlier in this paper, the debate over the appropriate mission of the community college is likely to continue and sharpen.

The survey evidence presented here, based on the responses of a large number of faculty, suggests a number of possible problems for community colleges as they continue to expand community-service and noncredit activities. Both academic and vocational faculty rate community service as the fourth most important activity, with basic skill preparation being considered a necessary evil. There are also divisions with respect to the appropriate academic and occupational emphasis. This picture is consistent with the view of faculty as "independent islands" operating with relatively little communication among themselves, caused to a large extent by the fact that they teach in different programs that are funded in different ways (e.g., Grubb & Kraskouskas, 1992; Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Dougherty, 1994). In particular:

> faculty downplay basic skills and continuing education activities, suggesting that growth in this area is seen as a diversion from the mainly collegiate functions that have traditionally been the focus of college activities;
>
> a significant minority of faculty feel more emphasis should be given to basic skills, perhaps reflecting a frustration with the inadequate skill levels of students who show up at community colleges;
>
> faculty are evenly split between transfer and workplace training on both the current mission of their institution and what the mission should be;
>
> there is sizable disagreement among faculty within an institution as to both what the current mission is and what the mission should be;
>
> only one in ten faculty are very satisfied with the current mission of their institution, and instructors in basic skills, instructors in continuing education, and part-timers are particularly dissatisfied;
>
> participation in new initiatives is low, but is generally unrelated to views on mission, with the important exception that instructors active in contract training and school-to-work view basic skills as more important than the transfer function.

Although the national survey data used in this paper allow us to paint perhaps the first systematic picture of faculty views on institutional mission, it has obvious limitations. The NCRVE/RAND survey was not designed explicitly to examine the issue, and therefore the data available are limited to three

somewhat restrictive items. Ideally, one would administer a more detailed survey, backed up by institutional case studies. What is really needed is an attempt to take the next step and assess the consequences of faculty disagreements over mission and of a lack of clarity at the institutional level as to whether a single as opposed to multiple missions has beneficial or deleterious effects on outcomes for students and employers.

Having made this qualification, the results presented in this study are cause for concern over the continuing expansion of community college noncredit activities, particularly of the community-service variety, but also in basic and remedial education. It appears that many faculty are not supportive of this move. The marginalization of these activities in relation to the traditional academic and vocational missions, with a different faculty that is often housed in separate centers, is problematic and may increasingly lead to disputes over the allocation of scarce resources. Given changing student demographics, demand for noncredit activities is likely to continue to grow, and colleges may need to figure out ways to integrate regular full-time faculty into these efforts. There is a sense from the data presented here that the development of ever more new activities has resulted in fragmentation of purpose and dissatisfaction with the status quo.

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